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Note on "The Curtains"

NOTE ON "THE CURTAINS"

The play which opens this number is essentially designed for the theatre, a pantomime through which words are interwoven. To neutralize the disadvantage of the reader, who must substitute imagination for the more precise clarity of the theatre, a brief note may be of value.

The authors have assumed as their premise that a character in whom were combined the masculine and feminine psychology might catch a nearer glimpse of whatever spiritual verities exist than is possible to ourselves. This spiritual environment—since the play is seen through the eyes of the central character, Ralfar—is therefore the dominant motive. The curtains, with white light beyond them; the steps; darkness: these are symbols to which long usage has given fixed values. They are symbols merely; yet what they imply is to Ralfar much more immediate than the materialistic environment which for that reason must be represented as semi-transparent and without reality. To none of the other characters, until the end of the play, does the spiritual background become visible.

The story is concerned with the progress of the central character, and the reactions to that progress. It leads through experience, threatening to divide a completeness at the first unstable but afterwards confirmed by the attainment of impersonality. Thenceforth no other search is possible save toward the infinite. There comes a last call of earth seeking to drag the central figure downward to meet its need. Above that call await the last stages of mysticism.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The play has no ending; the moment after the final curtain perhaps—one does not know—completes a circle.

C. H. and M. G.

EMILIO DE MENEZES

Somewhat over a year ago the Brazilian Academy, and that small minority of Brazilians for whom the Academy exists, suffered, in the death of Emilio de Menezes, a loss which many of his compatriots find it hard to over-estimate. A native of Brazil, "he was one of the greatest poets of the Portuguese tongue," to quote a Brazilian critic; and, while the individual may make reservations to an unrelieved eulogy of the dead poet, it is certain that much of cultured Latin America reaffirms this opinion.

The difficulty which confronts the foreign commentator who would sum up his achievements is inherent in the inadequacy of all translation, but especially marked when the translator's subject is the work of an artist so fastidious in the use of his native tongue as was de Menezes. Like Raymundo de Correio, he showed strongly the reaction of his generation against the bombastic sentiment of the pioneer poets of Brazil, and this reaction evidenced itself in an aristocratic attitude toward his calling, expressed by the art-for-art's-sake slogan of Parnassianism. As Edna Worthley Underwood states in a recent letter to *POETRY*, de Menezes is often compared to Baudelaire, and I would add that the comparison particularly applies to the ease and apparent spontaneity with which he handles the unusual rhyme. In